A BRILLIANT WOMAN.---THE SECOND OF A SERIES OF STORIES.

By JAMES L. FORD.

THE first time I ever met Carolyn Smithers she asked me what I thought of Kant's "Critique on Pure Reason," and that, as I afterward learned, was her favorite conversational gambit. I told her I had not looked into it since the beginning of my sixteenth year, when I had just recovered from the measles and was beginning to fancy myself afflicted with religious doubts and uncertainties. Underlying both of these complaints, as I distinctly remember now, was a strong desire to frighten my grandmother into the belief that I was about to become an infidel like Tom Paine.

Such was my first meeting with one of the most famous young women that New York has ever known. The last time I saw her, half a dozen years later, she said nothing about Kant and had ceased to take any interest in his theories. She had ceased also to be a dominant figure in New York society, had ceased even to be Miss Smithers, and now spoke with unaffected earnestness and simplicity about certain small woolen socks which she was knitting for the little creature who within the past few months had become the soul of her universe—a universe which was real and had completely supplanted that creation of German metaphysics which had once been her stock in trade.

In the meantime, however, she had raged like a forest fire in the very best social circles that the town can boast of. And few and bold were they who, during the half dozen years of her reign, dared to question her rightful claim to the title that she bore.

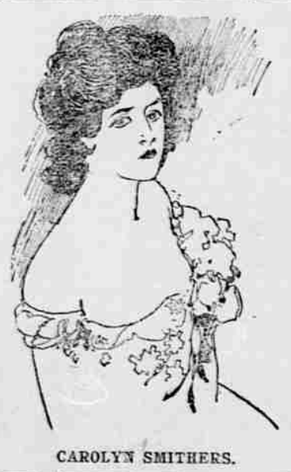
And it is eminently fitting that I, who once or twice meekly disputed her sway—getting severely snubbed for my pains—and who was actually present at the first of the preliminary skirmishes which culminated in her Waterloo and transformed her from what she was then to what she is now, should tell the story of that meeting, which was fraught with so much import for her and the society which she had so long adorned.

At the time of my first encounter with Miss Smithers she had recently graduated from a famous woman's college, and her chief desire in life was to play the role of a modern de Stael. On first meeting anyone it was her custom to apply some such testing acid as that of Kant's Critique, which not only determined the intellectual capacity of her acquaintance, but also served to set the conversation off at a sober pace and on an exalted plane. It required only a few minutes of this work to give her what she believed was a very accurate estimate of any person's rank in that strange dreamland that exists for imaginative, half-educated women, and is made up of those marvelous specimens of the human race whom they call "interesting."

It was Miss Smithers' dearest dream to gather about herself a circle of "interesting" men and women—painters, actors, singers, poets—who should look up to her as a queen, and by their presence lend to her drawing room—it was a "salon" in her dreams—such an air of distinction and artistic individuality as could be found in no other house in New York.

The fact that she was the only daughter of a wealthy and obedient father made her path toward the salon an easy one, and for a long time I continued to hear—from the lips of those fortunate enough to be bidden there—glowing tales of the high intellectual plane on which the conversations were carried on in the drawing-room and the open-handed hospitality that was dispensed by the "old man" to those refugees from the "salon" who sought his company in the dining-room.

I was never invited to take part in any of the delightful Sunday evening gatherings with which Miss Smithers' name and fame are inseparably connected in the social history of the metropolis, and all that



CAROLYN SMITHERS.

I know of what transpired on that field of the cloth of culture has been learned from hearsay and may perhaps be tinctured with the green of envy.

I will say, however, that the "old man's" whisky was as good and as honest as his own heart, a fact to which many a gifted artist or writer will still bear cheerful testimony. At one time the Smithers' mansion was spoken of as "one of the literary landmarks of New York," and it well deserved to be, for was it not in that very dining-room that Walker Whitewings, the author of "Yearnings of a Contrite Spirit," found and devoured a whole cold roast duck one bleak Sunday afternoon, while the rest of the company were in the drawing-room listening to the reading of a French drama in blank verse?

It was here also that old Tom Carleton, lured by his brother's widow, by birth Mlle. Dupois, of one of the most serious families in Geneva, spent one evening in the company of genius, only to learn at its close that his new $80 overcoat had been stolen from the dressing room.

Perhaps I would have been asked, too, despite my bad move on the Kant's Critique gambit, had I been an "interesting" person, for that was the genre she affected from the moment when she left college to that in which she allowed her star of brilliancy to be eclipsed by the dull pale moon of matrimony! I can remember the day when there were no "interesting" men and women in society, and those were indeed the "good old times." Now we have thousands of them, all talking at once and about themselves, and the town is so flooded with "cleverness" that the next high tide in it is liable to carry off a great deal more than the brother-in-law's $80 overcoat.

It was on this sea of cleverness that Carolyn Smithers first floated into fame, swimming easily and with complete self-confidence, supported by the bladders of the higher intellectual development. How that woman contrived to spend five years of her life among that crew of fakirs, queer foreigners and literary harlequins that swarmed in and out of her father's house without losing either her mind or her character, is one of the marvels of the age, but I doubt if even now, secure in the shelter of her own home and under the protection of a devoted husband, she knows enough of what she has escaped to be truly thankful to the gods for her good fortune.

The role of discoverer of adolescent or neglected genius and exploiter of the same is a very difficult one for a young woman to assume on the strength of the hodge-podge of indigestible learning which she has substituted for the remarkable gifts of intuition which are the heritage of her sex. It is a dangerous role, too, when we consider how sharp set unappreciated genius may become during a hard winter. Most of Miss Smithers' discoveries have long since disappeared from that social world into which she introduced them, but a few still linger, despite the efforts of honest men to dislodge them. It is a long while since any one has seen the Brahman priest who used to cut such an extraordinary figure in the few drawing-rooms to which he was admitted. He was one of Miss Smithers' discoveries, and I am bound to say that with his white linen robes and turbaned yellow face, he was a thing to be remembered. He talked quite glibly, too, about the Buddhist creed, and convinced a great many of the most interesting people of New York that it was quite the thing in the way of religion, and far superior to anything that was to be obtained at conventional places of worship. I used to like to see him trotting about, and was sorry when he proved to be rather a clever mulatto, who had been educated in Germany, probably with a view to social possibilities in New York. Curiously enough, all his education and philosophy had never completely destroyed the cravings which are native to his race, and his earnest talks on Buddha always made the atmosphere redolent of gin.

Sometimes I used to wish that Miss Smithers liked me and would ask me to her house, but now I know that it is far more interesting to have a pretty girl like Polly Prentice look trustingly up into your face and wonder how it feels to be so awfully clever, than to hear an inferior actor describe the vast conspiracy made up of jealous players, which has prevented him from securing a New York engagement, or to listen to the wails of neglected poetic genius.

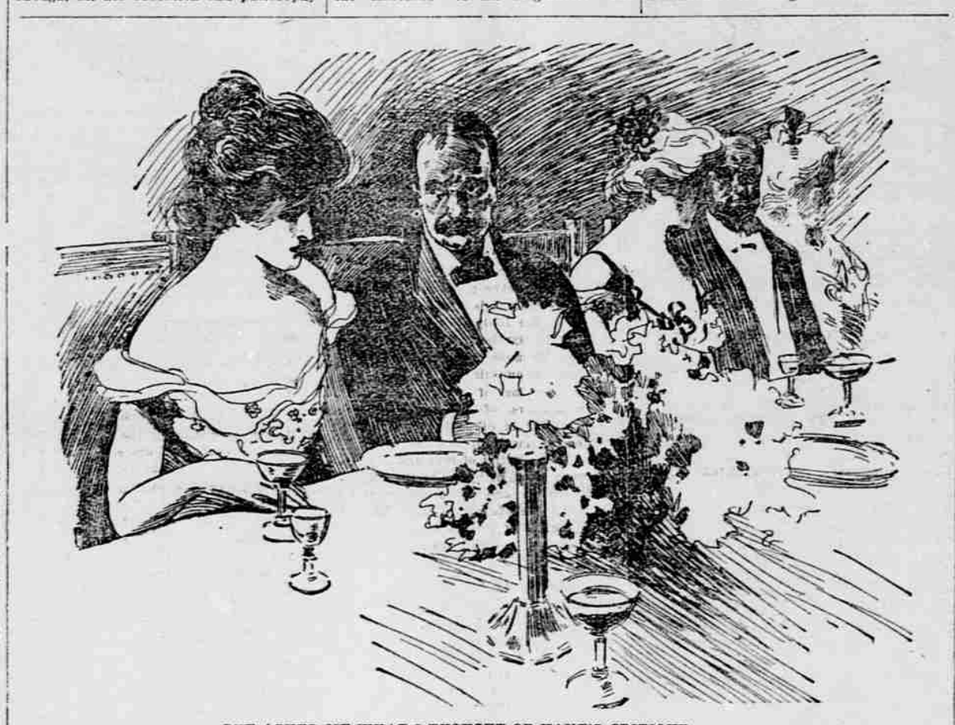
All this, however, has but little to do with the occasion to which I have already referred, and which proved one of such social importance to the town. It was a dinner party given by Mrs. Joe Brindley, and Miss Smithers sat at Joe's right hand, while I sat next to Polly Prentice, and on the left of Mrs. Joe, who seemed nervously anxious. And of all afflictions that a woman can have, that of the wandering eye is the hardest that her friends can be called upon to bear. Tallboys sat directly opposite to me and even before Mrs. Joe had begun to unbosom herself to me, instinct whispered that he was the cause of her annoyance. The truth is that, sweet and charming as she is, Mrs. Joe does not possess the wisdom of the serpent in social matters, and I have known her to invite one traveling Englishman to meet another, without giving due warning to either, in the firm belief that they would assimilate like the ingredients in a successful salad. Moreover, she is an inveterate matchmaker—that is to say, she is always asking persons who do not wish to wed, to meet those of the opposite sex who have tried to and failed.

Now Tallboys always irritates me. It was I who created him through a timely word of advice, and yet he almost ignores the existence of his originator. The truth is, that when in my heedless, impulsive way I showed the smooth-shaven, vapid-looking man of ten years ago how to transform himself into the whiskered owl, who is known today in the most brilliant circles of New York society as Tallboys, the profound student of sociology, I builded better than I knew. The first time I saw him was when he came to me as one crying in the wilderness, because, as he wailed it, he was utterly unable to secure an opportunity to "make himself heard on the subject of municipal reform." He seemed so heart-broken and so sincere in his desire to "make himself heard"—or, in other words, to hear himself talk—that I took pity on him and whispered in his ready ear one of the secrets of metropolitan success.

I bade him purchase a fur overcoat and cultivate a luxuriant crop of whiskers, assuring him that thus armed and accoutred, he would be certain to command universal reverence and consideration.

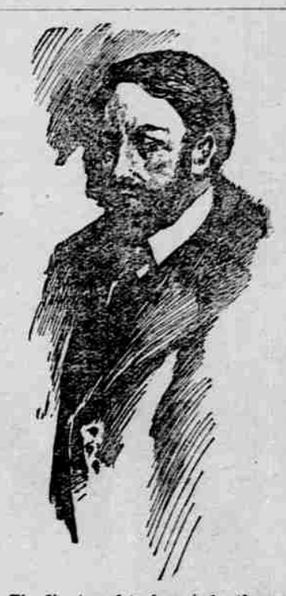
"In New York," I told him with much seriousness, "the direct road to fame is by the way of an imposing set of whiskers. The fur overcoat will convert you into a distinguished citizen, and entitle you to a seat on the platform at meetings of every sort and description. The newspaper artists are certain to embody you in their hastily made sketches, because it is much easier to catch the likeness of a bearded face, than of one that is clean-shaven. Moreover, whiskers always stand for great learning and intelligence in the public minds."

Tallboys took my advice, and within a year I heard him speak at a meeting of the "Women's Guild for the Illumination of the Lower Classes," and I noticed that the chairman on catching sight of the overcoat and whiskers introduced him with much gravity as "a gentleman who had made a thorough study of the conditions of life in the congested districts," a branch of learning which is held in the



SHE ASKED ME WHAT I THOUGHT OF KANT'S CRITIQUE.

"I'm afraid I've made an awful mistake," whispered Mrs. Joe, at last, "but it all happened through Joe's sending him a card for tonight instead of next Friday, when he would be the only lion. It really is not safe to bring two such interesting people together, but now that I have done it, I do wish that she would just shine and dazzle him. You know he is becoming a great power in municipal affairs and, well, we all know that Carolyn is



The direct road to fame is by the way of an imposing set of whiskers.

the most brilliant woman in New York society. And would you believe it?"—here she lowered her voice in a deep and solemn pitch—"they never met one another until tonight."

The next thing I knew, Tallboys was in full blast. "I tell you," he said impressively, "the working classes must have recreation. I have no sympathy with any movement that tends to deprive them of innocent amusement."

This novel theory and the solemn manner in which it was uttered made a profound impression upon us all. All conversation ceased and I actually almost stopped eating, so great was the interest excited by this bold announcement of Mr. Tallboys' liberal views.

"Give them their playgrounds and parks, where they can pass their summer evenings, and in the winter, let concerts be arranged for them so as to keep them as far as possible from the theatres. There should be courses of lectures, also, but what the laboring man really requires more than anything else, is the saloon where he can buy soda water, cocoa, almost everything in fact, except intoxicating beverages. My studies of life on the East Side convinced me long ago that a place of this sort would be liberally patronized, and, under judicious management, would undoubtedly make a great deal of money."

"Would you deprive the workingman of all malt and alcoholic beverages, or do you favor allowing him a little beer, or a glass of light wine with his meals?"

The voice came from the other end of the table and we all started with surprise to see Miss Smithers leaning forward with an air of eager interest as she put her question in the firm tone of one whose mind has long since been made up on the subject. Tallboys was the only person at the table who was not in the least affected by this extraordinary manifestation of interest on the part of a woman who had always seemed to live in an intellectual atmosphere which was exclusively her own.

"Certainly the workman should be permitted to drink a little sound red or white wine with his dinner, and I am heartily in favor of beer in moderation. There should be, however, a law forbidding the sale of more than two glasses in one evening to the same person, and that law, in my opinion, would completely do away with drunkenness. Moreover, the money saved by moderation in drink could be well expended for tickets to the concerts and lectures. In this way the working classes could be gradually educated up to a loftier plane of thought."

"But," exclaimed Miss Smithers, who was now almost beside herself with excitement, "what sort of lectures would you consider suitable to the needs of the working man?"

"Something calculated to elevate them," replied Mr. Tallboys. "I myself have a lecture on 'The Folk Songs of Iceland,' which I am willing to deliver without charge, and I am certain that a series of Saturday evening talks could easily be prepared which would, to a large extent, counteract the evil influences of the saloon and playhouse. Among the topics to be treated in these discourses I would suggest the use of the ballot, Greek architecture, the Elizabethan drama, and talks about strange people and far-off lands."

Mr. Tallboys paused and turned his attention to what was before him and as his jaws closed on a huge mouthful of terrapin I heard Miss Smithers say to Joe Brindley: "How fascinating it is to listen to a man who is so sound in his views and so marvelously original! How is it that no one has ever seen fit to introduce me to Mr. Tallboys before tonight?"

A few words will suffice to tell the remainder of this little tale of how brilliancy, which had reigned unchallenged for five years was completely knocked out in the first round, by solemn, pretentious, asinine ignorance. The very next day Tallboys and Miss Smithers were seen talking earnestly together at the Academy of Design—she said the meeting was accidental—and within six weeks their engagement was announced. Early in the spring they were married, and when I saw Carolyn Tallboys the other day she was talking about woolen socks and wondering whether Harvard or Yale was the best university in the country.

She has ceased to be anything on her own account and devotes her time to revolving around Tallboys, who as almost any woman in New York will tell you, "is making a great name for himself in politics."

That is to say, he is a candidate for some office or other whenever there is an election, and I am told that he would undoubtedly be elected were it not for the fact that whenever he makes a speeches he loses from 50 to 150 votes, according to the size of his audience. Two years ago he came within a very few votes of being chosen an alderman. But that was the year he had the pneumonia and was not allowed by his physicians to talk in the open air.

HOW THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT MAKES ITS POSTAGE STAMPS

THAT the American people are fond of letter writing as well as talking is fully demonstrated in the fact that Uncle Sam's sales of postage stamps, stamped envelopes, postal cards, newspaper wrappers, etc., during the past fiscal year amounted to $104,785,986.73, being an increase of $7,098,215.18 over 1900.

The process of manufacturing postage stamps is known to but few, and there have been long and costly law suits in relation to different patents employed in the manufacture of them. Prior to July, 1894, all our stamps were manufactured by the American Bank Note Company, of New York, but at that time it was decided that the Bureau of Engraving and Printing could do the work equally as well and as cheap, and the Government began doing its own work in this line.

During the years the Bureau has been doing the work of printing postage stamps only a little more than $50 worth of material has been spoiled, so carefully is every detail of the work carried out, and, too, the army of employes at the Bureau know that material spoiled by them through ignorance or carelessness must be paid for. This rule naturally keeps the workmen on their best efforts to do their best.

From the time the blank paper leaves the Treasury Department until the stamps are in the hands of the stamp clerk and ready for the purchasers the process of manufacturing stamps is most interesting. The first step is to make the die. The device, which has generally been the head of some distinguished public man, is settled upon by the Government, and the drawings made. An engraving in deep intaglio is made upon steel, which has been softened by a peculiar process of decarbonization, and the intaglio, technically known as the "female die," is ready for use.

Next comes the upper, or "male die." A cube of soft steel is pressed by a hydraulic ram upon the intaglio engraving, and after it has been pressed into all the depression is slightly touched up with the graver. A cameo counterpart of the intaglio is thus formed, and from these the sheet is made up by pressing the hardened steel upon the softer metal.

The discovery of the process for softening and working the steel greatly simplified the task of printing stamps, as formerly but one pair of dies were used, owing to the heavy cost of engraving, and the practicable impossibility of making by hand a number of exactly similar devices. The process of printing postage stamps was, therefore, a very slow and expensive one, some of the engravers in the bureau receiving as high as $6,000 per year.

After the dies are made they are arranged for the presses, each press chase carrying 400 dies, or in other words, printing sheets of 400 stamps each. The female die alone is inked and the paper rests upon this, the male die coming down upon this and pressing the paper upon the inked surface. The printing is true steel engraving, the process being exactly opposite from that employed in printing from type, the lower surfaces receiving the deep color and the upper one being light. There are in use at the bureau thirteen of these stamp presses, and an average of 15,000,000 stamps are turned off daily, though in case of an emergency 40,000,000 could be printed.

After the printed sheets of stamps come from the presses they are delivered to the drying room, where they are thoroughly dried and then turned over to the gumming machines, of which there are a number. These machines, or "dry boxes," are sixty feet long and are kept at a temperature of about 123 degrees. The sheets are fed into an opening over which rolls a glass roller distributing a gum composition made principally of glucose and dexterine, this giving the gum the sweet potato taste all have experienced in licking a postage stamp. Great care is taken in preparing this glue, as it is necessary to give the stamps a coating which will not become soft and sticky through exposure to a moist atmosphere, and still will be sufficiently adhesive to prevent the possibility of the stamps becoming detached from the letters to which they are affixed.

Several years ago an entire issue of 3-cent stamps had to be retired on account of inferior gumming, the cost of this to the Government reaching perhaps $50,000, and giving the letter sending public a great deal of trouble. This is the only serious and costly error that has ever been made in the stamp line. When the stamps come from the gumming machines they are sent to the perforating division, thoroughly pressed down, and then they go to the perforating machines, of which there are twenty-two, each with a capacity of perforating 6,000 sheets per day.

Two operatives are required to operate each machine, and the work is such as to require the greatest skill and accuracy. The sheets are run through one at a time, the machine perforating and cutting the sheet in half. These sheets then go to another machine, where they are perforated crossways and again cut in half, making sheets of 100 stamps each. After this the sheets are placed in pressing presses, and subjected to a pressure of eight and one-half tons for twelve hours. This completes the stamps, and they are then ready to be turned over to the postoffice agents, who have offices at the bureau.

To prevent stealing, wasting, etc., there is a system which makes anything of the kind almost impossible. The paper for the stamps is bought from the manufacturers by the Treasury Department, and upon its receipt is counted by that department. When it is issued to the Bureau the officials there again count and receipt for it. The printer when he receives it counts and receipts for it, and thus from one department and division to the other it is counted and receipted for, the system making it easy to trace a shortage.

A certain percentage of paper is allowed the printers and their assistants for spoilage, but all sheets over this amount must be paid for by the operatives spoiling the same. As carelessness in the Bureau costs money, the percentage of spoilage is light. One spoiled stamp necessitates the destroying of the full sheet of one hundred. Each sheet is carefully scrutinized by experts, and all defective ones, whether from printing, gumming, or perforating, are put aside, marginal marks indicating to whom the loss is to be charged. These spoiled sheets are all counted and at stated times destroyed by being burned in a furnace. All perfect sheets go to the counters and are put up in packages of 500 quarter sheets, making 200,000 stamps, and these are then ready for the vaults. So perfect is the system that there is seldom a loss or shortage.

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing also prints all the revenue and other stamps of the Government, and the process for manufacturing is about the same as for the ordinary postage stamps. When the work was undertaken by the Bureau great difficulty was found in getting the right kind of machinery for gumming and perforating the stamps, the Bank Note Company, in New York, which had formerly had the contract, refusing to assist in any way.

Fortunately the director secured the services of a lady who had been with the company for a long while, and she was able to furnish information which enabled the Bureau to make gumming machines and dry boxes which do the most perfect work.

The perforating machines also caused no end of trouble, but now there is no trouble experienced. This gave more trouble than any other portion of their manufacture, and occasioned several law suits. Men scarcely beyond middle life can remember the trouble and annoyance occasioned by the old-time sheets of stamps which were without perforation or division of any kind. A regular part of the equipment of every office and every house was a tin ruler and a pair of shears to cut postage stamps from the sheet.

From the department of the Third Assistant Postmaster General stamps are issued to the postoffices throughout the country, and this work requires a large force. Postmasters at offices of the first class are required by law to keep stamps of every denomination on hand, while other offices are only required to keep ordinary stamps, special delivery, and postage due, the latter not being for sale, but for use. In ordering stamps, cards, and envelopes postmasters are not permitted to go beyond the amount of their bonds, and settlements are made at the end of every quarter.

When a postmaster at some out of the way place orders stamps in large amounts it is known that something wrong is going on or contemplated, and an investigation is made by the department. By doing this crooked postmasters are frequently picked up or a stop put to their illegitimate work.

Since July, 1894, when the Bureau of Engraving and Printing began the manufacture of stamps, the following changes in design and color have been made: One-cent, Franklin, green; 1-cent, Franklin, blue; 2-cent, Washington, carmine; 3-cent, Jackson, purple; 4-cent, Lincoln, velvet brown; 5-cent, Grant, light brown; 6-cent, Garfield, magenta; 8-cent, Sherman, lilac; 10-cent, Webster, mileri green; 15-cent, Clay, olive green; 50-cent, Jefferson, orange; $1, Perry, black; $2, Madison, sapphire blue; $5, Marshall, gray green.

It was in 1890 that Mr. Wanamaker put the 2-cent stamp back to carmine. The 2-cent stamp was first issued in 1863 for newspaper postage, and Jackson's head in black was the design. The color was changed to bronze in 1869, and thus it remained until 1883, when letter postage was reduced from 3 cents and the 2-cent was made the stamp of first importance. In September, 1887, the color was changed to green, and some time before that Jackson removed for Washington. It is likely that carmine will remain the color for the 2-cent stamp, as the postal congress adopted this. However, it is suggested that carmine suggests the Puritanic spirit.

Time was in this country when a red petticoat was looked upon in New England as a sign of the Scarlet Woman of Babylon, and a room draped in scarlet suggested an atmosphere of the lower regions. But the times have changed, and letter writers will continue to use the carmine stamp or stick on two of the green 1-cent ones.

STONE MARKS CAPITAL'S MERIDIAN.

FEW PERSONS are perhaps aware that the meridian of Washington coincides with the longitudinal axis of the Capitol building, and that to the west of the prolongation of North Capitol Street, just beyond Boundary Street, is a stone known to the initiated as the North Meridian Stone, which is supposed to be upon the line of the meridian. The visitor to the Naval Observatory is told that the meridian passes through the centre of the clock house of that institution, but this is not the true meridian of Washington; however, it answers all the purposes of computation.

The meridian of Washington has often been confounded, even by experienced writers, with the meridian of the old District of Columbia. The latter extends from the cornerstone of the District, now built into the wall surrounding the Alexandria lighthouse, through the Executive Mansion, north along the centre of Sixteenth Street, and thence over what was Meridian Hill, to the intersection of the diagonal lines at the north point of the District, about one mile due West from Silver Springs, Maryland. Upon the brow of Meridian Hill stood about eighty yards south of the old standpipe, which was for many years an unsightly termination of the fine street. Commodore David Porter's mansion, the entrance door of which was due north of the front door of the President's house. The farm upon which this mansion stood was long known as the "Meridian Hill Farm." On the edge of the south lawn, in close proximity to the Mansion, was placed the "Meridian Stone."

This stone was nearly two feet across and two feet high. The north edge of it was circular, and upon it was afterwards placed a brass sun dial. It was from this stone that Meridian Hill received its name, and hence, also, "Meridian Hill Farm." The stone remained in its original position until about the time of the opening of Sixteenth Street, extended, when it was removed by a property owner to the southwest corner of Fourteenth and R Streets, where it was used as a carriage step. It has been taken away from this place, and its present location is unknown.

The other diagonal line, extending through the old District of Columbia, intersects with the so-called meridian line, near the Washington Monument, extends west across the Potomac, passes near old Fort Corcoran, and on to the intersection of the diagonals at the west corner of the District of Columbia, near the village of Falls Church, in Virginia. Eastward it extends through the Rotunda of the Capitol, and on to the intersection of diagonals at the east point of the District, about three miles east of Benning Bridge.

At the crossing of these lines, near the Washington Monument, is the precise centre of the original District of Columbia. At this point was placed, in 1792, a stone, known as the Jefferson Stone, or Centre Stone. When the ground adjacent to the Monument was filled in by General Babcock, the stone was buried to a depth of several feet, and, of course, the central mark of the District obliterated. Mr. J. A. Wineberger, however, a member of the Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District, urged on the authorities the importance of not destroying the old landmark, and, in consequence, a rod has been inserted to mark the spot.

The stone originally stood on the banks of old Tiber Creek, and had a blue rock foundation which was six feet high on the creek side. It was covered by a huge sandstone cap, about five feet square, and eight inches thick. The capstone and part of the foundation were removed in 1872, by General Babcock, who did not know the significance of the landmark. The rod now denoting the former situation of the stone is on the east side of the road between the fish ponds and the intersection of Virginia Avenue.

NEW MISSION FOR THE VESUVIUS.

THE dynamite cruiser Vesuvius will soon have a new mission to perform if the Merchants' Association of New York succeeds in convincing Secretary of the Navy John D. Long that its services are necessary in destroying some of the numerous ocean derelicts which constantly menace commerce on the Atlantic.

It is said that no less than twenty of these abandoned vessels lie directly in the paths of transatlantic liners. This has for some years been a matter of grave concern to those interested in shipping, not only in this city, but in coast towns along the Atlantic seaboard.

The appeal to the Secretary of the Navy will be in the form of a memorial, and will be signed by all the prominent importers and exporters in the United States. It will request that the Vesuvius be despatched on a voyage of destruction. The cruiser has not been conspicuous since the Spanish-American war, but her power in throwing tons of dynamite at the fortifications of Santiago and at the supposedly impregnable walls of Morro Castle are well remembered.

Recent storms have increased the number of these floating hulks, according to a report issued from the United States Hydrographic Office at Washington. The work of this department is to locate these derelicts, chart their routes, and supply such information as will lead to their removal. Navigators leaving this port are kept well informed of the location and augmentation of this "graveyard fleet," as it is commonly called by those who are engaged in maritime work.

The most prolific spot for abandoned vessels is in the immediate vicinity of Sable Island, 100 miles southeast of Nova Scotia, where the remains of more than 100 vessels are known to strew the ocean bed. Another spot which all navigators dread is off the coast of Massachusetts, known as the Cape of Good Hope region. While the name implies confidence, some of the most frightful ocean disasters of recent years have occurred at this point.

At the Hydrographic Office accurate records of wrecks are kept and every ship's master entering the port of New York is expected to forward to Washington information of any derelict that he may have seen on his voyage.

These records furnish interesting statistics, and show that the year 1899 was the most disastrous to shipping in its history. There were 400 vessels wrecked, entailing a loss of 300 lives, and property valued at $3,000,000.

It has been customary with the officers and crew of an ocean-going vessel immediately upon sighting a derelict to attempt to burn the abandoned vessel in order to sink her, but in most cases this has been found impossible, as the boat will only burn to the water's edge and becomes more dangerous in this condition than it was before, as the masts, spars and all the upper works are destroyed and the submerged hulk lies so low in the water as to be difficult of discovery.

Half way over the Atlantic and directly in the track of the transatlantic liners is the hulk of the new steel bark Nonpareil, which was set on fire by the crew of the ship Knight Templar. The Nonpareil was last seen in latitude 39 degrees 50 minutes north, longitude 42 degrees. In latitude 29 degrees north, longitude 31 degrees west, is a 300-ton vessel with masts gone, while in latitude 28 degrees north, longitude 65 degrees 20 minutes west, there is floating a large schooner which is directly in the path of coasting vessels. These are only a few of the many abandoned vessels recently reported to the Hydrographic Department by skippers arriving at the port of New York.

The Merchants' Association, in presenting all these facts to the Secretary of the Navy, will urge his co-operation to the end that those drifting and worthless hulks may be removed, thus assuring the safety of thousands of lives and millions of dollars worth of property in ships and cargoes.